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MARCH 11, 2013](#)



**LAC
DMH**
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
550 S. VERMONT AVE., LOS ANGELES, CA 90020 HTTP://DMH.LACOUNTY.GOV



MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.
Director

ROBIN KAY, Ph.D.
Chief Deputy Director

RODERICK SHANER, M.D.
Medical Director

February 19, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director

SUBJECT: **PSYCHIATRIC MOBILE RESPONSE TEAMS**

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) Emergency Outreach Bureau (EOB) operates a Field Response Operations (FRO) unit responsible for providing a range of psychiatric and emergency services to individuals and families in acute emotional distress. Services are available from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. seven days per week. FRO provides services from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. on a case-by-case basis as resources allow.

FRO provides a range of services listed in Attachment I. Services include field assessments for suicide/homicide/grave disability, emergency response to critical incidents or mass casualty events, homeless outreach, DCFS minors, and collaboration with law enforcement agencies on high profile individuals or situations.

FRO is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of licensed mental health professionals trained in suicide and violence threat risk assessment. FRO has a Psychiatric Mobile Response Team (PMRT) in each Service Area. Although each team is assigned to a specific Service Area, PMRT staff is routinely re-assigned throughout the county on a daily basis to ensure timely response. FRO has a partnership with several law enforcement agencies providing similar services as described above but with a focus on 911 calls and patrol car requests for assistance with individuals who are emotionally distressed, homeless, or suffering from a severe and persistent mental illness. Law Enforcement Teams (LET) offer a co-response field team where a DMH clinician is paired with a law enforcement officer.

A total of 214 clinical staff provides field services through FRO (Attachment II). A smaller group from this pool of clinicians have collateral assignments in the specialty programs listed in Attachment I. The Mental Health Alert Team (MHAT) is composed of 8 clinicians who provide mental health resources to local law enforcement Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT). CNT typically responds to Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) call-outs, barricade, and jumper situations.

Each Supervisor
February 19, 2013
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The Special Prevention Unit (SPU) is a collateral assignment composed of 7 clinicians providing case management and monitoring of high risk persons who have made or pose a threat to elected officials and other high profile persons.

If you have any questions, please call me at (213) 738-4601, or your staff may contact Dr. Tony Beliz, Deputy Director, at (213) 738-4924 or via e-mail at Tbeliz@dmh.lacounty.gov.

MJS:RK:TB:mb

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, CEO

**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH-EMERGENCY OUTREACH BUREAU
FIELD RESPONSE OPERATIONS**

Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams (PMRT)

Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams (PMRT) consist of DMH licensed clinical staff assigned to a specific Service Area in Los Angeles County. Teams have legal authority per Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5150 and 5585 to perform evaluations for involuntary detention of individuals determined to be at risk of harming themselves or others or who are unable to provide food, clothing, or shelter as a result of a mental disorder.

Law Enforcement Teams (LET)

This co-response model pairs a DMH clinician with a law enforcement officer to provide field response to situations involving mentally ill, violent or high risk individuals. Primary mission is to provide 911 response to community requests or patrol officer requests for service. Teams also assist PMRT as resources permit. Current programs:

- Santa Monica Police Department Homeless Liaison Program (HLP)
- Burbank Police Department Mental Health Evaluation Team (BMET)
- Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Mental Evaluation Team (MET)
- Long Beach Police Department Mental Evaluation Team (Long Beach MET)
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority Crisis Response Unit (CRU)
- Pasadena Police Department Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Evaluations (HOPE)
- Los Angeles Police Department Case Assessment and Management Program (CAMP)
- Los Angeles Police Department Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART)

School Threat Assessment and Response Team (START)

START provides threat prevention and management services to educational institutions in collaboration with school districts, colleges, universities and technical school, and local, county, and Federal law enforcement agencies. The program provides services designed to prevent targeted school violence.

Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME)

HOME provides countywide field based outreach and engagement services as well as intensive case management to underserved and overlooked homeless persons who are mentally ill, living in homeless encampments, and in other locations where outreach is not provided in a concentrated manner or readily available.

Mental Health Alert Team (MHAT)

MHAT collaborates with federal and local law enforcement agencies to provide mental health response to SWAT call-outs. Clinical staff collaborate with law enforcement in facilitating a negotiated solution to barricade and hostage situations.

Special Prevention Unit (SPU)

SPU provides collaboration with federal and local law enforcement agencies to mitigate threats, decrease use of the 911 system and provide linkage and case management to the mental health system. SPU addresses persons of concern including 911 high utilizers, chronic callers to public figures, suicide-by-cop issues.

Emergency Response Teams (ERT)

Emergency Response Teams (ERT) are comprised of DMH staff that provide field response to critical incidents such as school violence, earthquakes, or acts of terror. ERT provides on-scene consultation and crisis intervention to survivors, their families, first responders, and the community. ERT collaborates with the LA County Office of Emergency Management and the LA City Office of Emergency Management.

Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT)

Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) are comprised of PMRT staff providing outreach and engagement to mentally ill homeless persons. HOT increases the likelihood of effective outcomes for this population in situations when they are at risk of involuntary hospitalization.

Psychiatric Emergency Teams (PET)

Psychiatric Emergency Teams (PET) are mobile teams operated by psychiatric hospitals approved by the Department of Mental Health to provide 5150 and 5585 evaluations. Team members are licensed mental health clinicians. PET operates similar to PMRT and provides additional resources in specific geographical regions.

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY OUTREACH BUREAU		
Homeless Outreach & Law Enforcement Team		
DAYTIME STAFF		
Programs	Supervisors	Total Staff + Supv
PMRT SA 1	1	7
PMRT SA 2	1	9
PMRT SA 3	1	12
PMRT SA 4	1	8
PMRT SA 5	1	5
PMRT SA 6	1	7
PMRT SA 7	1	11
PMRT SA 8	1	7
Burbank MHET	0	1
CAMP	1	7
HOME	1	9
HOPE	0	2
LBMET	1	5
MET	0	4
MTA/CRU	0	2
SMART	2	17
START	2	10
TOTAL	<u>15</u>	<u>123</u>
STAFF		
Total After hours Staff	Total Daytime Staff	Total Daytime & After hours Staff
91	123	214



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March 11, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director

SUBJECT: **INTEGRATED HOMELESS SERVICES**

During February 12, 2013, meeting of your Board, Supervisor Antonovich requested information concerning the manner in which the Department of Mental Health (DMH) provides services to homeless and potentially homeless individuals with mental illness. Focusing on the needs of homeless individuals with mental illness is a high priority for DMH due to the prevalence of mental illness in the homeless population. More specifically, it is estimated there are 51,000 homeless individuals living in Los Angeles County; 33% of those individuals are estimated to be suffering with mental health issues, 34% struggling with substance abuse disorders, 22% have some kind of physical disability, and 18% are veterans. This memorandum will provide you information regarding the specific programs DMH offers to individuals with mental illness who are homeless. A discussion of system improvements in process with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) are outlined at the conclusion of this document.

PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

Outreach and Engagement

DMH dedicates extensive resources to outreach and engagement for homeless individuals with mental illness using various strategies including (but not limited to) our directly operated mobile homeless outreach team, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funded Full Service Partnership programs that prioritize homeless populations, and special integrated treatment teams (e.g., those funded through the MHSA Innovations program, the Street to Home project, Project 50, and others). The efforts to reach homeless individuals rely on a personal approach by outreach and engagement staff who meet and offer services to homeless individuals where they are – on the streets and in shelters. Outreach workers also assist homeless individuals with the application process necessary to qualify for benefits establishment and to meet the basic criteria for housing. Our experience is that establishing a relationship of trust is often a lengthy process but one that, over time, can successfully result in clients' entering treatment.

In order to ensure that we are able to address the multiple needs of people who are living on the streets or at risk of becoming homeless, DMH participates in a growing

number of specialized inter-agency treatment teams. One example of this approach is Project 50, established by your Board to address homelessness in the eastern downtown area of Los Angeles. Through a network of agencies such as DMH, JWCH Institute, Inc., Skid Row Housing Trust, DPSS, Department of Health Services, Public Health's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Division, the Housing Authority for the City of Los Angeles, the Veteran's Administration, the Social Security Administration, and the Commission on Disabilities, Project 50 successfully engaged and housed the most vulnerable individuals on Los Angeles' Skid Row. DMH has also recently implemented the MHSA-funded Innovations programs including the Integrated Mobile Health Team model in which housing developers are integral partners in engaging and housing individuals with mental health needs while supportive services are delivered by representatives of health, mental health, and substance abuse agencies. Finally, DMH works with a wide variety of community-based programs that offer crucial services such as temporary shelter and other social supports. Our staff provides outreach services at year-round shelter locations and other places where homeless individuals may receive assistance.

Specific Interdepartmental Programs

The following specific interdepartmental programs focus on the needs of individuals with mental illness who are homeless or at risk of being homeless:

- **DPSS/DMH Collaboration:**
DMH staff are co-located in DPSS offices throughout Los Angeles County. In this program, DPSS workers identify individuals who may have a mental illness that requires special attention and who may qualify for disability. In such cases, the co-located DMH clinician conducts a prompt assessment; individuals with a mental illness are provided with services and, if needed, with housing resources. Please see page 4 for a description of process changes currently being designed by DMH and DPSS.
- **Sheriff's Department/Law Enforcement Agencies/DMH Collaboration:**
Often, the first point of contact for a mentally ill homeless person is a law enforcement agency or the DMH's Psychiatric Mobile Response Team (PMRT). The Department's PMRT provides joint field visits and evaluations with Sheriff's Department Deputies and local municipal law enforcement agencies' officers. Although these teams are typically employed to determine whether individuals meet the criteria for hospitalization, in addition, they are equipped to conduct homeless outreach and linkage services as needed and appropriate.
- **DMH and Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs Collaboration: Veterans and Loved Ones Recovery (VALOR) Program:**
The DMH VALOR Program provides outreach and engagement for military veterans and their family members with serious mental illness and/or

co-occurring issues, including substance abuse and chronic medical conditions. Components of the program include linkage and referral to mental health and substance abuse treatment, housing resources, and employment assistance programs for individuals with less than an honorable discharge who are not served by the Veterans' Administration. Veterans' outreach and engagement is implemented through a collaborative effort with the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs, the California Department of Veteran's Affairs, the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs, and numerous community agencies devoted to the homeless population.

Housing Supports

Under the Department of Mental Health's Justice, Housing, Employment & Education Services program, a continuum of housing resources are available to homeless DMH clients. Emphasis is placed on helping clients obtain permanent housing which is available to those currently receiving mental health services, meeting income requirements, who also have an established history of homelessness. In order to ensure clients can maintain themselves in permanent residences and provide for basic needs, DMH staff work toward establishment of benefits. Specific housing programs directly operated by DMH include the following:

- Emergency Shelter Programs for adults and transition-age youth provide short-term assistance.
- Shelter Plus Care and Homeless Section 8 vouchers provide a Federal housing subsidy that allows the tenant to pay 30% of their income toward the rent, with government funding covering the balance of the rent. DMH works with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACOLA) to receive vouchers, enroll clients in the Section 8 programs, and provide (directly or through contract agencies) monitoring of clients receiving vouchers.
- The DMH MHSA Housing Program has developed 33 permanent supportive housing projects; 18 of these buildings are currently open and housing homeless individuals and families with mental illness.
- Rental Assistance provides short-term funding for homeless clients, as well as those clients at risk of homelessness. This program is able to offer an array of supports, including security deposits, household goods, and an eviction prevention program to clients in specialty programs that qualify.

Facilitating Collaboration: Streamlining the DPSS-DMH Process

The Directors of DPSS and DMH conferred about mechanisms for streamlining the process by which individuals with mental illness are assisted with General Relief (GR) and other DPSS entitlements. The particular case brought to their attention by the Board was used as an example to determine if there were immediate or longer term actions that ought to be taken. They determined that DMH co-located staff may reduce duplication of effort by meeting briefly with clients who receive a referral from a County mental health program in order to obtain necessary consents. However, the more lengthy assessment conducted for new referrals can be waived for those already engaged in mental health treatment. This modification will streamline the process of being determined as Needing Special Assistance (the category that is exempt from the work requirements of GR to receive continuing benefits) for many homeless individuals. Further, they directed their staff to analyze the application process to see if there are other efficiencies that might be undertaken. This analysis is currently on going.

If you have any questions, please contact my office or the Department's Adult System of Care Deputy Director, Ms. Cathy Warner, L.C.S.W., at (213) 738-2756 or by e-mail to cwarner@dmh.lacounty.gov.

MJS:RK:CW:mb

c: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Health Deputies
Cathy A. Warner, L.C.S.W.